

March 14, 2009

Springfield Labs cut as drug's purchase limited

SPRINGFIELD - The number of methamphetamine laboratories in Arkansas has been cut by about 85 percent since a new law went into effect in the spring of 2008, Arkansas Attorney General Dustin McDaniel said.

Act 508 of 2007 requires pharmacists to document sales of pseudoephedrine, a decongestant used to manufacture methamphetamine, McDaniel said. Sales are monitored by the Arkansas Crime Information Center.

Speaking Monday at a meeting of the Northwest Arkansas Home Builders Association, McDaniel said 14,770 pseudoephedrine sales have been blocked in the past six months.

In an interview after the meeting, McDaniel said **LeadsOnlabs**, the Dallas company that administers the program, receives some telephone calls from apparent "meth smurfers," or people seeking pseudoephedrine to make methamphetamine. Sometimes the "smurfers" make the call from a pharmacy where they are trying to buy pseudoephedrine.

For the past two months, **LeadsOnlabs** has been forwarding those calls to "customer service," which in reality is a special telephone in the undercover narcotics division of the Arkansas State Police. A narcotics officer takes the call and pretends to be a customer service representative. "Pharmacists didn't want to deal with customer complaints," McDaniel said. "If it becomes painfully obvious these folks are trying to get around the system, they are forwarded to the narcotics division. From what I understand, they hang up the phone, and go bust the people. ... They can tell exactly who they are and where they are." McDaniel said a person can legally purchase no more than nine grams (0.32 ounces) of pseudoephedrine a month.

McDaniel said the state soon will begin using a similar system to monitor metal theft. Thieves trying to cash in on the sale of stolen metal such as copper will be subject to additional legal monitoring. New home construction sites are frequent targets of thieves. "Everywhere in the state, metal theft has reached epidemic proportions," he told the group of about 300.

If someone enters a scrap metal business carrying copper that appears to be from an industrial air conditioning system, and the "toothless thug stands there and says, oh no, it came from my mama's house," the business will be able to check to see if the same person has sold scrap metal recently anywhere else in the state.

McDaniel told the group Arkansas is faring fiscally much better than most states during the current recession. Arkansas is one of only seven states in the nation that has a budget surplus, he said. "Arkansas may not have had the high highs other states had financially, but we won't have the low lows either," McDaniel said. "I believe going forward we'll find ourselves better situated as a state," he said.

LEADSONLABS CLIENT – SPRINGFIELD POLICE DEPARTMENT, SPRINGDALE, ARKANSAS

LeadsOnline.com
LeadsOnlabs.com

1-800-311-2656
1-888-994-7771